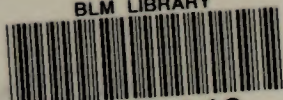


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April 1993



# Vale District Planning Update Malheur Resource Area



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1993



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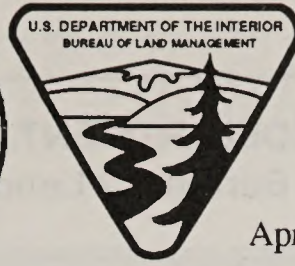
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Bureau of Land Management

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100 Oregon Street  
Vale, Oregon 97918



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# Planning Update

## Introduction

This mailer is part of an effort by the Vale District of the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), and three other eastern Oregon BLM districts, for an enhanced public notification and involvement program. This mailer is designed to help you understand proposals and decisions involving the BLM. Public involvement and input is important in the decision making process of BLM's ongoing land use planning and implementation.

This report in general summarizes progress toward implementation of the Northern Malheur Management Framework Plan (MFP), Southern Malheur Rangeland Program

Summary (RPS) issued in January 1984, and the Ironside RPS issued in March 1981. Similar progress reports and RPS updates were issued in December 1986, September of 1989 and 1991, and May of 1992. This document lists accomplishments completed in the Malheur Resource Area during fiscal year 1992 (10/1/91 to 9/30/92) and actions anticipated for fiscal year 1993 (10/1/92 to 9/30/93).

This summary is not intended to be a comprehensive statement of all activities completed, but rather a brief status report.

## What Can You Find In This Document -

*Mailers like this one will be developed annually. While a flexible format will be maintained for the mailer, major sections similar to those described below will be included in each edition.*

**Feature Report:** Reports in this section highlight topics of concern or high public interest within the Malheur Resource Area and may include major accomplishments completed the previous year or upcoming events. Featured in this edition is a report on Watchable Wildlife areas in Malheur Resource Area.

**Summary of Work:** This section identifies accomplishments of the resource area in FY 1992, and also the FY 1993 emphasis areas, by each major resource program. The purpose of this section is to describe the work completed the previous year and list those areas of focus for the upcoming year.

**Environmental Assessment Register:** Listed in this section are those environmental assessments (EAs) sched-

uled for completion in FY 1993 or beyond. This section is included to facilitate public participation in the impact analysis of proposed on-the-ground actions.

**Vale District Mailing List:** This section is essential to maintain an accurate mailing list of interested individuals, groups and organizations. The Vale BLM District addresses a complexity of issues in its management which necessitate public notification and involvement in the decision making process. Another purpose of this section is to facilitate you in notifying BLM of those issues/topics which interest you.

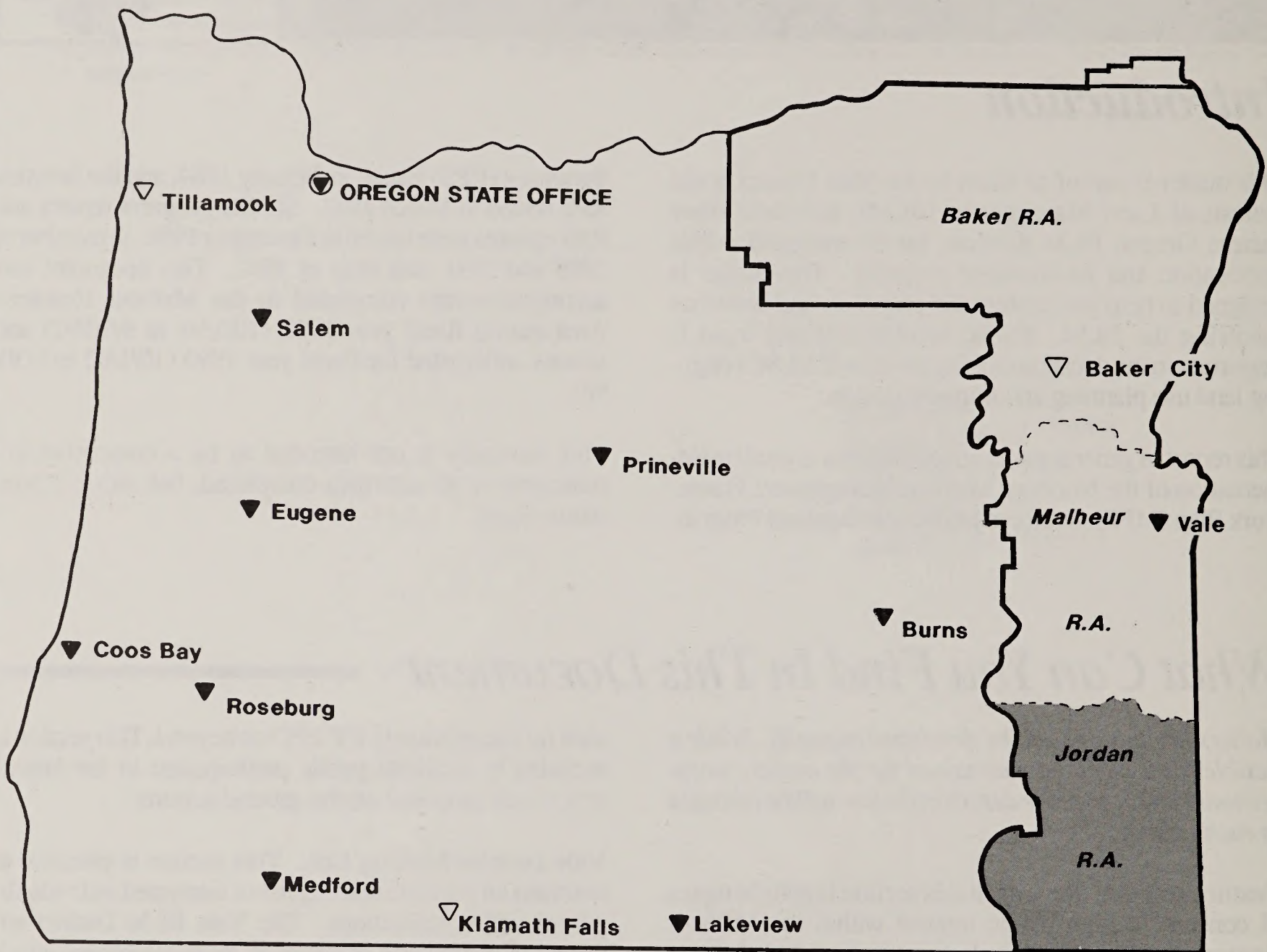
*This mailer should bring you up-to-date concerning implementation of BLM's land use plans in the Malheur Resource Area. Any comments regarding format or content of the mailer to improve future issues would be appreciated. Suggestions should be sent to the Bureau of Land Management, Malheur Resource Area Manager, 100 Oregon Street, Vale, OR 97918.*



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
Bureau of Land Management

VALE DISTRICT

GENERAL LOCATION MAP



- BLM State Office
- ▼ BLM District Office
- ▽ BLM Area Office
- District Boundary
- - - Resource Area Boundary



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# Watchable Wildlife

The Watchable Wildlife Initiative originated in Oregon when the private organization Defenders of Wildlife, the Bureau of Land Management, the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, and other state and federal agencies developed a wildlife viewing guide in 1988. Similar efforts were then developed in other western states. The purpose of the Watchable Wildlife designation is to show the public readily accessible areas for recreational wildlife viewing. A BLM booklet with maps and descriptions of the 44 designated BLM Watchable Wildlife areas in Oregon and Washington is now available at the Vale District Office. Two of the designated areas—the Lower Owyhee River Canyon and Leslie Gulch—are in Malheur Resource Area.

## The 13-mile Lower Owyhee River Canyon

The canyon corridor designated as a Watchable Wildlife Area is located below Owyhee Reservoir. The canyon habitat and perennial water support a wide variety of bird species, including abundant populations of waterfowl, songbirds such as the northern oriole, and birds of prey. Other wildlife inhabiting the canyon include beaver, mule deer, bobcat, coyote, and a number of small rodents.

In cooperation with the Bureau of Reclamation and Malheur County, an interpretive site was developed this year with a parking area, handicapped access, picnic tables, a vault toilet, an interpretive sign, and brochures. A Spanish language version of the brochure is also planned. Undeveloped wildlife viewing sites along the corridor will also be designated and signed.

Several volunteer projects took place in the Lower Owyhee Canyon during 1992 to enhance wildlife habitat. Local



Boy Scouts helped install a goose nesting platform near the interpretive site. The Boy Scouts also wrapped wire around many of the mature cottonwoods to preclude beaver damage and placed bird nesting boxes for wood ducks, woodpeckers and wrens. Other volunteer and educational projects within the corridor are now being planned.

## Leslie Gulch

The spectacular and rugged Leslie Gulch watchable wildlife area has a resident herd of California bighorn sheep which may be viewed from the Leslie Gulch road. Other wildlife inhabiting the area include a variety of songbirds, hawks, and game birds such as chukar and quail. A Watchable Wildlife interpretive sign is being designed. Also, since the area is part of the Leslie Gulch-Succor Creek National Back Country Byway, information on Watchable Wildlife will be incorporated into the Back Country Byway literature.

We're excited about this new program and will continue our efforts toward educational and recreational wildlife viewing opportunities at our Watchable Wildlife areas.



# Summary of Work

This summary is organized into the following 11 areas of accomplishment/focus:

*Range Management*  
*Hazardous Materials*  
*Fish/Wildlife/Botany*  
*Lands & Rights-of-Way*  
*Minerals*  
*Cultural Resources*  
*Wilderness*  
*Recreation*  
*Noxious Weed Control*  
*Fire Management*  
*Wild Horse Management*

## Range Management Program

### 1992 Accomplishments

This rangeland program summary (RPS) is the fifth in a series to provide information on that portion of the Malheur Resource Area located in the Ironside and Southern Malheur EIS areas.

Vegetation monitoring was completed on all 54 allotments within the Malheur Resource Area, including 21 "I" (Improve), 32 "M" (Maintain) and 1 "C" (Custodial) category allotments. (These three classifications are determined by the allotment's condition or potential for resource conflict.) An active use supervision program resulted in numerous visits to all "I" and "M" allotments.

The 1992 grazing season, like 1991, was another drought year, with water being the main element lacking. The lack of water and vegetative growth required non-use or reduction in livestock numbers, and as a result only approximately 60 percent of normal grazing was utilized resource area-wide. Also because of the drought conditions, turnout was delayed in most areas, utilization levels were monitored, and livestock were removed early from most allotments.



3' x 3' trend photo plot.

Nine allotments were evaluated during 1992 and the findings are summarized below. Carrying capacity of the nine allotments was determined through collection and analysis of actual use, utilization, and climate data. Trend studies were used to determine if land use plan objectives were being met and whether grazing preference changes were warranted. The evaluation process will continue as scheduled on the remaining "I" and "M" allotments. Allotments in the "I" category are evaluated every five years and the "M" category every ten years, unless problems dictate a change in schedule.

**Black Butte Allotment** grazing system, which should be fully implemented, will give the Malheur River total rest two out of three years. Among the evaluation's recommendations was revision of the Memorandum of Understanding with the Department of Fish and Wildlife and development of a coordinated Resource Management Plan. Another need identified was development of meaningful browse objectives in coordination with ODFW. The evaluation noted improvement of riparian areas along the Malheur River.

**Board Corral** evaluation showed grazing preference is within grazing capacity. Objectives are apparently being met in Wildhorse Basin, Board Corrals and Antelope Spring pastures; however, upland trend is not apparent in Alkali pastures where indicators conflict. A recommenda-



tion was to continue winter use in Alkali pasture and remove livestock by April 1. The evaluation further indicated a need to monitor wild horse use numbers and utilization to avoid resource damage.

**Brogan Canyon** Allotment evaluation showed riparian area improvement in Lower, Diversion, Smith Private, and Chrome Mine pastures. The evaluation further indicated a need to revise the Allotment Management Plan with the following constraints:

- \* Defer grazing of native upland plant community during grazing season (4/01 to 7/01) in at least two of every three years.
- \* Limit livestock access to riparian community during mid-summer (6/15 to 9/30) to maintain habitat improvement.

The Brogan Canyon Allotment evaluation showed additional forage above current preference, but no increase was given because vegetative trend studies did not support the increase.

The evaluation indicated a need to develop a demonstration riparian response to a three-year, spring/fall/rest rotation cycle within the Diversion pasture.

**Gordon Gulch** evaluation recommended that riparian trend studies be established on Birch Creek and Indian Creek. The evaluation also indicated the need to develop a grazing system which avoids season-long use. No changes were recommended in livestock allocation due to lack of data.

**Harper Basin** Allotment showed very little difference between preference and grazing capacity. The primary objective for Rufino Butte pasture should be changed from "Improve Ecological Condition" to "Maintain Ecological Condition" to make the objective consistent with the late ecological condition classification. The evaluation further indicated a need to eliminate the RPS management objective about improving riparian communities adjacent to Windy, Cherry Creek, Tim's Peak and Hannah Reservoirs, based upon limited ability for improvement due to soils and fluctuations in water level. Another recommendation was to develop and implement an interdisciplinary activity plan for management of livestock grazing which is compatible with other consumptive and non-consumptive resource uses and with the following constraints:

- \* Defer grazing of native upland plant communities during the growing season (4/01 to 7/01) in at least two of every three years.
- \* Limit livestock access to riparian communities during mid-summer (6/15 to 9/30) to maintain

riparian habitat improvement and attain functioning riparian systems.

- \* Ensure that livestock management actions comply with WSA Interim Management Policy when constructing any proposed projects, maintaining existing projects, or implementing changes to season of use or number of livestock.

**Lava Ridge** evaluation showed no change in grazing preference and recommended continuation of the current grazing system. The evaluation further indicated the need to establish a trend plot and a management objective in North Bully pasture.

**Rockville** evaluation showed no change in grazing preference. The evaluation indicated a need to formalize an interim grazing system until the allotment boundary appeal can be resolved. The evaluation further indicated a need to identify areas that have little potential for improvement in the short term without physical manipulation, and to evaluate both the cost effectiveness and feasibility of such treatment.

**South Alkali** evaluation showed no change in grazing preference. The evaluation recommended fencing spring seeps at Alkali Springs from livestock use and developing alternate livestock water. The evaluation further indicated a need for implementation of a grazing system which recognizes growth needs of special status plants, defers grazing on perennial range two years out of three, and maintains some annual range for curlews and owls. Another recommendation was to consider additional exclosures for special status plants if the downward trend continues.

**Willow Creek** evaluation showed no change in grazing preference. A recommendation was made to change the grazing system since the allotment may not have the potential to improve from early ecological condition to middle ecological condition. This recommendation was based upon the lack of perennial grass species and the abundance of annual grasses such as cheat grass.

The 1992 Rangeland Improvement Program consisted of constructing 4.25 miles of fence and 11 springs.

## 1993 Plans

The 54 allotments will continue to be monitored with study emphasis on actual use, utilization and trend. In riparian areas, there will be high priority given to monitoring studies and use supervision. Special emphasis will also be given to ensuring that grazing schedules are followed to allow riparian areas to improve.



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Seven allotments are proposed for evaluation in early 1993:

<i>Allotment #3 (0202)</i>	<i>Castle Rock (0211)</i>
<i>Poall Creek (0103)</i>	<i>McCain Springs (0505)</i>
<i>Birch Creek (0506)</i>	<i>Tunnel Canyon (0512)</i>
<i>West Bench (0104)</i>	

## **Hazardous Materials Program**

### ***1992 Accomplishments***

Cleaning efforts and monitoring continued on the 1,900-gallon fuel oil release that occurred in 1990 when an underground storage tank at the Vale BLM District warehouse contaminated the underground aquifer. Further information is available at the Vale District Office.

Two dumping incidents were inventoried and cleaned up within the Malheur Resource Area.

The resource area submitted requested information to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) on three closed dump sites (Vale, Slides and Lytle Boulevard). After reviewing the district-compiled data, the EPA ranked the Vale and Slides sites according to the latest guidelines—the Hazard Ranking System II. The EPA gave the Vale and Slides sites an NFRAP (No Further Remedial Action Planned) designation, but continue to review the Lytle Boulevard site information.

In compliance with the Emergency Planning and Community Right-to-Know Act (EPCRA), the resource area submitted reports to the State of Oregon Fire Marshall Office on materials being stored at the Vale, Juntura and Birch Creek Administrative sites.

A Hazardous Materials Level I survey was conducted on the Kovich Land Sale.

### ***1993 Plans***

Site cleanup activities and monitoring on the fuel spill at the District warehouse will extend through 1993 under the guidance of the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ).

Increased overview and coordination will be done in the future with the DEQ on mining activities in the Malheur Resource Area. Other future plans are to continue respond-

ing to illegal or “Midnight Dumps” and hazardous material incidents that may occur. In coordination with other programs, the Vale BLM District is developing methodologies and inventory plans for identifying potential hazardous materials sites/situations.

Level I surveys will be conducted on several realty actions initiated in the resource area.

EPCRA reports will be completed on administrative sites where necessary.

## **Fish/Wildlife/Botany Program**

### ***1992 Accomplishments***

Key wildlife habitats were monitored in seven grazing allotments scheduled for evaluations during the winter of 1992-1993. Evaluation of riparian pastures continued to be a priority. Wildlife resource information was also provided for two mine site developments and a mill site for Teague Minerals in Nyssa.

Low-level color infrared and true color aerial photography covered approximately 20 miles of streams that had riparian management objectives identified in the land use plan. Approximately 170 miles of low level imagery have now been flown on the resource area.

At the Lower Owyhee Watchable Wildlife site, 15 nest boxes and a goose nesting platform were installed, and 65 mature cottonwood trees were wrapped with wire to protect them from beaver damage. In addition, native plants were seeded around the interpretive area to prevent weed re-invasion and enhance wildlife habitat.

Special status species monitoring continued on 25,000 acres of western sage grouse habitat. Eight new strutting grounds were identified in the effort.

Wildlife/botany staff provided support to planning activities, including the Harper Allotment Management Plan, the proposed wild and scenic river designation on the North Fork of the Malheur River, and the Leslie Gulch ACEC Plan. In addition, an interdisciplinary planning effort was initiated by wildlife and range staff to develop a coordinated activity plan for the South Alkali Management Area. That plan will address management of various area resources such as wildlife habitat, range, recreation, the Oregon Trail, and sensitive plants.



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A petition was received by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) in the fall of 1991 to list as threatened five plant species found in the resource area. The petition was based upon concern about ground-disturbing activities associated with the exploration and development of cyanide/heap leach mining. This threat appears to have abated in the resource area for the present time. A response outlining known sites and threats, or absence thereof, was sent to USFWS.

Three Conservation Agreements were written addressing management of habitat for five federal candidate plant species: Mulford's milk-vetch (*Astragalus mulfordiae*), Harper Valley fiddleneck (*Amsinckia carinata*), grimy ivesia (*Ivesia rhypara* var. *rhypara*), Ertter's groundsel (*Senecio ertterae*), and Packard's blazing star (*Menzelia packardiae*). The agreements were signed by both the BLM State Director and the Regional Director of USFWS.

Two species of noxious weeds were found near Succor Creek in and near the enclosure for smooth blazing star (*Mentzelia mollis*), another federal candidate species. These weeds were removed manually (by hand) in the enclosure and where feasible at adjacent sites. Manual weed control was also done near sensitive plant sites in Leslie Gulch.

Field surveys were conducted prior to work implementation on 38 projects, and 11 other projects were reviewed prior to construction activities. In addition, a general species list of all known plants in the resource area has been completed.

An amendment was proposed to the Northern Malheur MFP which would add 788 acres in the Coal Mine Basin Area as an Area of Critical Environmental Concern/Research Natural Area. This proposal is to be addressed in the ongoing BLM Boise District's Owyhee Resource Management Plan, and would incorporate a total of 2,200 acres in the ACEC/RNA.

## 1993 Plans

Completion of the Leslie Gulch ACEC Plan and the draft South Alkali Management Plan will be high priority for the 1993 wildlife/botany programs.

A pamphlet describing smooth blazing star will be available for the public at the Succor Creek enclosure in the spring of 1993.

Inventories and monitoring will be conducted for special status species such as sage grouse and burrowing owls. Monitoring of bald eagles will be increased in the winter of 1993, and neotropical migratory bird inventory and monitoring will continue.

The habitat management plan for Malheur forget-me-not (*Hackelia cronquistii*) will be monitored, and the process implementing the Conservation Agreements will begin. An inventory for golden buckwheat (*Eriogonum chrysops*) will be undertaken. Both of these species are federal candidates.

# Lands and Rights-of-Way Program

## 1992 Accomplishments

In 1992, the following seven rights-of-way were issued:

- \* Idaho Power - Resolve a trespass.
- \* Bureau of Reclamation - Four reservations were issued for powerlines and phonelines.
- \* Malheur County Road Department - Two rights-of-way were issued for road realignments in Juntura.

Two land-use permits were issued, one for an apiary site and the other for a turnaround area for heavy equipment.

The resource area resolved 10 cases of unauthorized use by issuing rights-of-way, collecting trespass fees, or resolving trespass.

The lands program has been actively involved in reviewing lands withdrawn for the Bureau of Reclamation (BR) for the Warm Springs, Bully Creek and Owyhee Projects. As mandated by Section 204(L) of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976, the Secretary of the Interior must review certain withdrawals within 11 western states, including Oregon, that were in effect on the date that FLPMA was passed. The purpose of the review is to determine whether or not lands that were withdrawn by various federal agencies prior to the enactment of FLPMA are being used for the purposes for which they were set aside.

Negotiations have been ongoing between BLM and BR management to resolve differences about which lands and uses are appropriate for a withdrawal to be continued under the administration of Bureau of Reclamation.

Realty specialists from BLM and BR have met in the field along with the irrigation districts' managers to establish a working knowledge and become familiar with the areas. Problem areas were discussed along with the concerns of the irrigation districts.

The Bureau of Reclamation has identified those lands they want retained in withdrawal status, and also the lands to be relinquished and returned for BLM administration.



A list of the cases remaining in dispute after the withdrawal review findings at the field level will be forwarded to the Washington Office for resolution.

## ***1993 Plans***

The 1993 workload includes right-of-way processing for utility lines, resolution of agricultural trespasses, and processing of short-term agricultural permits and renewal authorizations.

Work will be completed during the year on the Oregon Trail Farms land exchange which will benefit the habitat for Mulford's milkvetch, (a Category 2 candidate plant species under consideration for listing as Threatened and Endangered), an important stop on the Oregon Trail, and Alkali Springs.

# **Minerals Program**

## ***1992 Accomplishments***

The level of gold exploration activity decreased significantly in 1992. There were 11 notices processed for gold related projects, including one small gold placer project. No plans were processed. The level of work concentrating on the industrial minerals bentonite, zeolite and diatomite

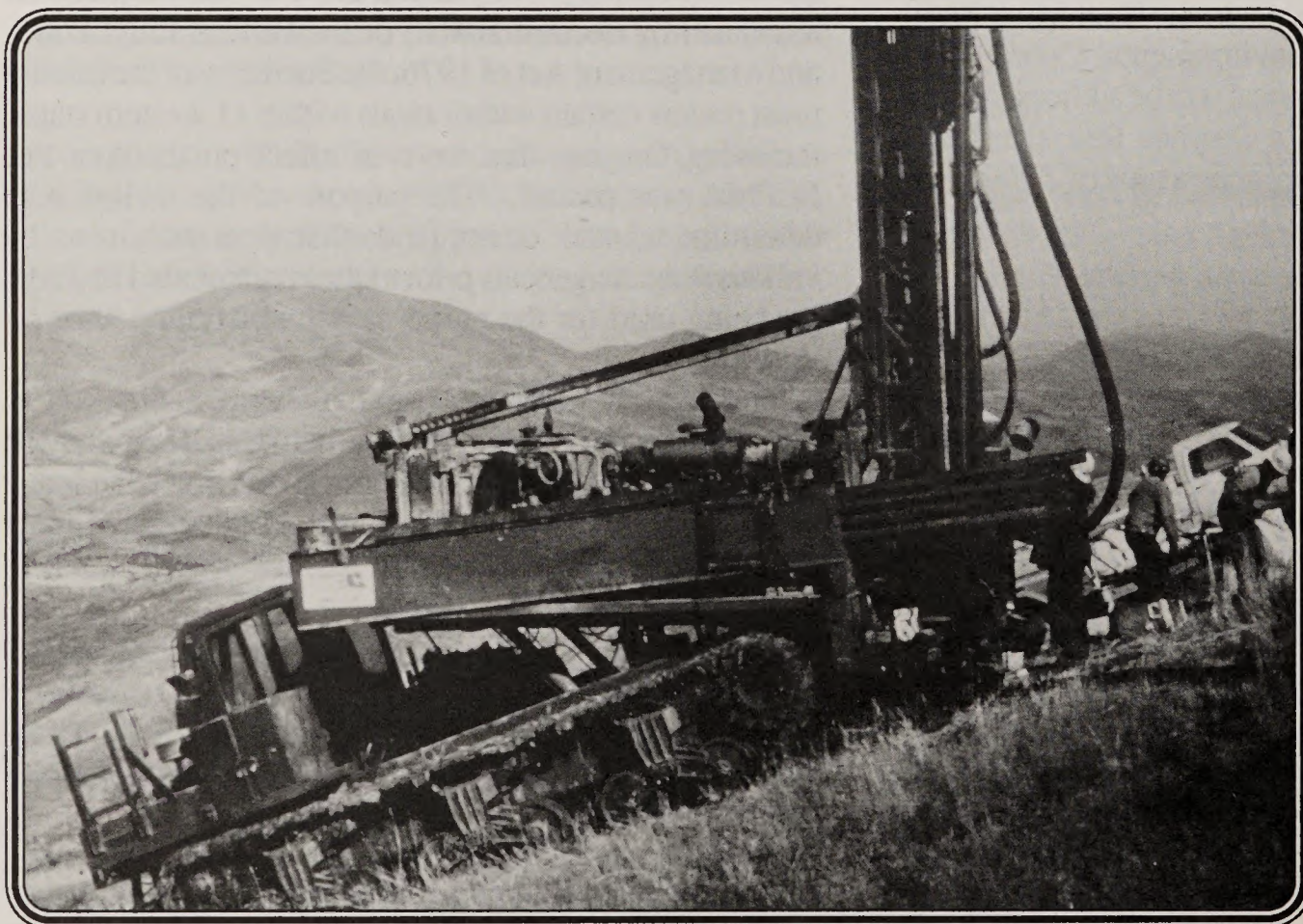
remained relatively constant. Three plans of operation were received for industrial mineral related projects. A few operators were working on geode and picture jasper prospects.

There were 58 compliance inspections completed, two noncompliance actions were rescinded, and six existing operations remain in noncompliance. No new notices of noncompliance were issued.

Reclamation was completed on 12 projects in 1992. This includes Horizon Gold's Hope Butte project which had as much as eight acres disturbed at maximum development. Final reclamation was also begun on Morrison Knudsen's Jesse Page project at Quartz Mountain. This project, which had as much as 20 acres of roads and drill pads constructed, was near completion at year's end.

An environmental assessment was completed to analyze impacts of the continued operation of Teague Mineral Product's bentonite operations. Also reviewed for potential environmental impacts were the TMP mill site south of Adrian and the GB Pit and A/B Pits in the Succor Creek area.

The Grassy Mountain Mine project site was leased by Atlas Precious Metals to Newmont Gold on a long-term lease in 1992. Newmont is currently analyzing existing data to determine whether to modify the current mine proposal which was submitted by Atlas in 1991. The EIS process will be resumed when Newmont submits their mine proposal. The draft EIS may be published in 1993.



*Gold exploration, Stokade Mountain.*

In 1992, there were 10 free-use permits issued for gravel to satisfy county and road district needs, and 14 gravel sales were issued to the public.

The resource area conducted 13 inspections and staked boundaries on community pits. Two community pits were closed, one due to high walls and the other because of non-use.

## ***1993 Plans***

The Mineral Materials Program will focus on achieving clearances for the designated community



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pits. Free use permits and gravel sales will be issued as requested and inspections of gravel pits will continue.

Few new gold exploration projects are expected in 1993 due to continued low gold market values. Exploration projects which remain active will be monitored and reclamation will be initiated upon completion of each project.

The remaining six projects in noncompliance will receive priority attention as administrative solutions are pursued. The small gold placer and the geode/picture jasper operations are expected to continue.

Geothermal exploration activity expected in 1992 is now scheduled for 1993 in the Known Geothermal Resource Area (KGRA). This area, located immediately southeast of Vale, has been selected by the Bonneville Power Administration as one of three pilot geothermal project sites in the northwest. Trans-Pacific Geothermal Corporation is expected to submit a notice of intent to drill shallow, temperature gradient holes during the spring of 1993. Proposals for further exploration using deeper drill holes would require submission of a plan of operations and an environmental analysis. The results of the exploration activity would be used to determine the feasibility of a geothermal power plant on the KGRA. Power plant development would require either an environmental assessment or an EIS depending upon the level of potential impact expected with the proposed development.

## Cultural Resources Program

### *1992 Accomplishments*

Cultural resource surveys were conducted on approximately 1,500 acres of public land administered by the Malheur Resource Area and involving 46 proposed projects. Cultural reports were submitted to the State Historic Preservation Office for 70 proposed projects. The surveys located six prehistoric lithic scatters, one of which had an historic component. None of the cultural resources identified, however, will be detrimentally impacted by any of BLM's proposed management activities.

Several Oregon Trail projects were accomplished in cooperation with the Recreation program:

In the Oregon Trail National Register District at Keeney Pass, two interpretive panels designed in 1991 were fabricated and installed. At this same site, the first phase of the native revegetation plan was implemented with the help of community vol-

unteers, including the Nyssa Alternative School and Boy Scout Troop 400 of Ontario.

Oregon Trail interpretive sites were developed at Alkali Springs and the wagon ruts near Farewell Bend.

Work commenced on eight interpretive panels—one for the Alkali Springs site, one for the wagon ruts near Farewell Bend, and six for Keeney Pass.

In cooperation with Malheur County, five fence gates were replaced with cattleguards to improve access to the Tub Mountain segment of the Oregon Trail, which includes the Alkali Springs interpretive site.

### *1993 Plans*

The Oregon Trail sesquicentennial (150th) anniversary celebration will occur in 1993 with the BLM participating in a variety of associated activities. In addition, eight Oregon Trail interpretive panels begun in 1992 will be completed and installed in time for the celebration.

As part of the Heritage Education initiative, a chapter will be developed for the Oregon Teacher's Activity Guide. This guide is designed to help enhance students' science literacy, their knowledge of Oregon's rich diverse cultural heritage, and their skill in thinking and communicating through studies and experiences involving history and archaeology.

## Wilderness Program

### *1992 Accomplishments*

The President forwarded his Oregon BLM wilderness recommendations to Congress during the summer of 1992. His recommendations were identical to those recommended by the BLM Oregon Wilderness Study Report package forwarded to him by the Department of Interior in October of 1991. For Malheur Resource Area, the President recommended wilderness designation of 117,110 acres within nine Wilderness Study Areas (WSAs); the remaining 155,390 acres, including six WSAs, were recommended by the President as nonsuitable for wilderness designation. When a Congressional decision can be expected is unknown, because Congress has no set timeframe to take action on BLM wilderness issues.

Interim management of the resource area's 15 designated WSAs included conducting surveillance and compliance





*North Fork of Malheur River.*

field checks throughout the year. Over 250 contacts were made during the third annual fall hunter patrol program associated with the WSAs.

In the Blue Canyon WSA, one grandfathered mining operation continued. In the Dry Creek Buttes WSA, three years of surface reclamation efforts on one mining claim block were concluded with full compliance accomplished to meet wilderness nonimpairment requirements. Three new activities occurred in three separate WSAs during the year: two approved range maintenance projects (a temporary surface water pipeline on an existing vehicular way in Cedar Mountain WSA, and the cleaning of an existing dry earthen reservoir in Dry Creek WSA); and the unauthorized blading of a short vehicular way in the Castle Rock WSA. Actions to mitigate the bladed route were implemented immediately.

## ***1993 Plans***

Interim management, including field surveillance and compliance monitoring, will continue in the 15 WSAs. Any projects proposed within the WSAs would be evaluated to determine consistency with the BLM's Interim Management Policy and Guidelines for Lands Under Wilderness Review (IMP). Ongoing efforts will continue on the three projects in Cedar Mountain WSA, Dry Creek WSA, and Castle Rock WSA to meet wilderness nonimpairment and/or reclamation requirements.

Hunter patrols will be conducted if adequate funding is available. In an effort to increase outreach, a fact sheet will be developed on each WSA for public distribution.

# **Recreation Program**

## ***1992 Accomplishments***

During the year, much attention was directed to preparing for the 1993 sesquicentennial national celebration of the Oregon National Historic Trail. Two new interpretive sites were

developed on the trail, one at Alkali Springs and the other at Birch Creek Wagon Ruts. Also, the replacement of eight interpretive panels at the Keeney Pass site neared completion.

Vale District implemented management for its first Watchable Wildlife area—Lower Owyhee Canyon, a 13-mile river corridor that provides ideal viewing of waterfowl, raptors, songbirds, reptiles and various game and nongame mammal species. After completion of the management plan, an interpretive site was designed and constructed. The interpretive site offers barrier-free access to picnic tables, a restroom, a viewing walkway and interpretive panel, and a brochure distribution box complete with a new brochure. Volunteers assisted with site construction and placement of wildlife habitat improvements.

The draft North Fork Malheur River Eligibility Study was completed and distributed for public comment. A 14-mile segment between Beulah Reservoir and the Malheur National Forest was specifically mandated by Congress to be studied to determine its eligibility and suitability for possible inclusion as a component of the National Wild and Scenic River System. The purpose of this first study phase, in accordance with the national Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, is to establish what, if any, outstandingly remarkable values, are associated with the river, and to determine whether or not the study river is free flowing.

Maintenance was conducted along the Leslie Gulch-Succor Creek National Back Country Byway and at five developed recreation sites—Chukar Park, Twin Springs, Keeney Pass, Leslie Gulch, and the new Watchable Wildlife site. A very successful volunteer campground host program was implemented at Chukar Park. In response to sanitation concerns, restroom facilities were placed at the popular, yet undeveloped, sites of Oasis on Brownlee Reservoir and Snively Hot Springs on the Owyhee River. In other actions at the Snively Hot Springs, boulder barriers were placed to limit damage by vehicles in the river's riparian zone, and volunteers assisted with site maintenance.

## ***1993 Plans***

Facilities and grounds maintenance will be conducted at the recreation and interpretive sites. An interpretive panel will be fabricated and placed at the Leslie Gulch Overlook as part of our Back Country Byway and Watchable Wildlife programs. In partnership with Malheur County, a BLM interpretive panel will be fabricated and installed at the new Trenkel Hill interpretive site on U.S. Highway 20/26 east of Vale.

Public outreach efforts associated with the Oregon Trail sesquicentennial will be emphasized with local communities and schools. Partnership with the county and Oregon Trail Coordination Council will provide roadside interpretation of the ill-fated Meek's Wagon Train.

A management plan for the Leslie Gulch Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) will be developed by an interdisciplinary team. Relevant values of this ACEC include



its high scenic values, numerous sensitive plant species, quality bighorn sheep habitat and population, and its primitive recreation use opportunities within three wilderness study areas. The ACEC, with its developed boat ramp and camping facilities, is also a destination for the recreating public of the 53-mile long Owyhee Reservoir. The first phase study of eligibility of the North Fork Malheur River will be completed. The suitability study phase for the study river is scheduled to be accomplished with the development of the Malheur Resource Management Plan, beginning in 1994.

## Noxious Weed Control Program

### *1992 Accomplishments*

A districtwide, five-year integrated weed control plan and EA completed and implemented in 1991 addresses all measures of control available to BLM. This program involves the integrated use of four methods to control noxious weeds: biological, chemical, manual and mechanical, and requires a pesticide use permit (PUP) for any herbicide use. There are currently 23 sites identified for noxious weed control in the Malheur Resource Area. Mediterranean sage, which has been located on the road near Riverside, was treated in 1992 by the Area Weed Coordinator.

### *1993 Plans*

Treatment on the 23 existing noxious weed sites in the Malheur Resource Area will be coordinated and monitored. A 415-acre competitive seeding started in the Freezeout Allotment and Little Valley Allotment to contain and control the spreading of halogeton will be completed in the spring of 1993.

## Fire Management

### *1992*

### *Accomplishments*

Malheur Resource Area updated its portion of the Vale District Fire Management Activity plan. The 1992 fire season for the area involved 27 fires, which is near normal for the area. Area-wide a total of 3,420 acres burned, well below the historical average.

Fire season lasted well into October, finally ending near month's end with increased precipitation and lower temperatures.



## Wild Horse Program

### *1992 Accomplishments*

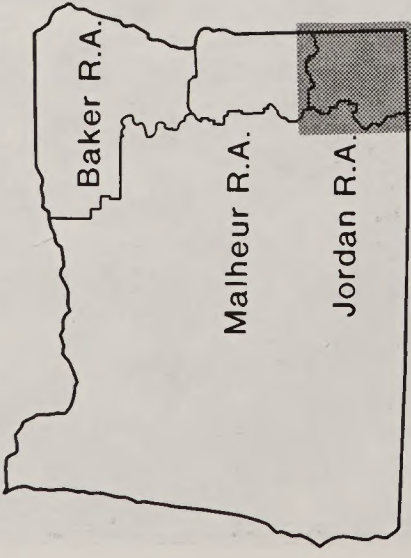
Malheur Resource Area has three Wild Horse Herd Management Areas (HMA): Cold Spring, Three Fingers and Hog Creek. In February of 1992, over a two-day period, 51 horses were gathered from the Hog Creek HMA and taken to Burns where all but seven horses were adopted in the Bureau's Adopt-A-Horse Program.

### *1993 Plans*

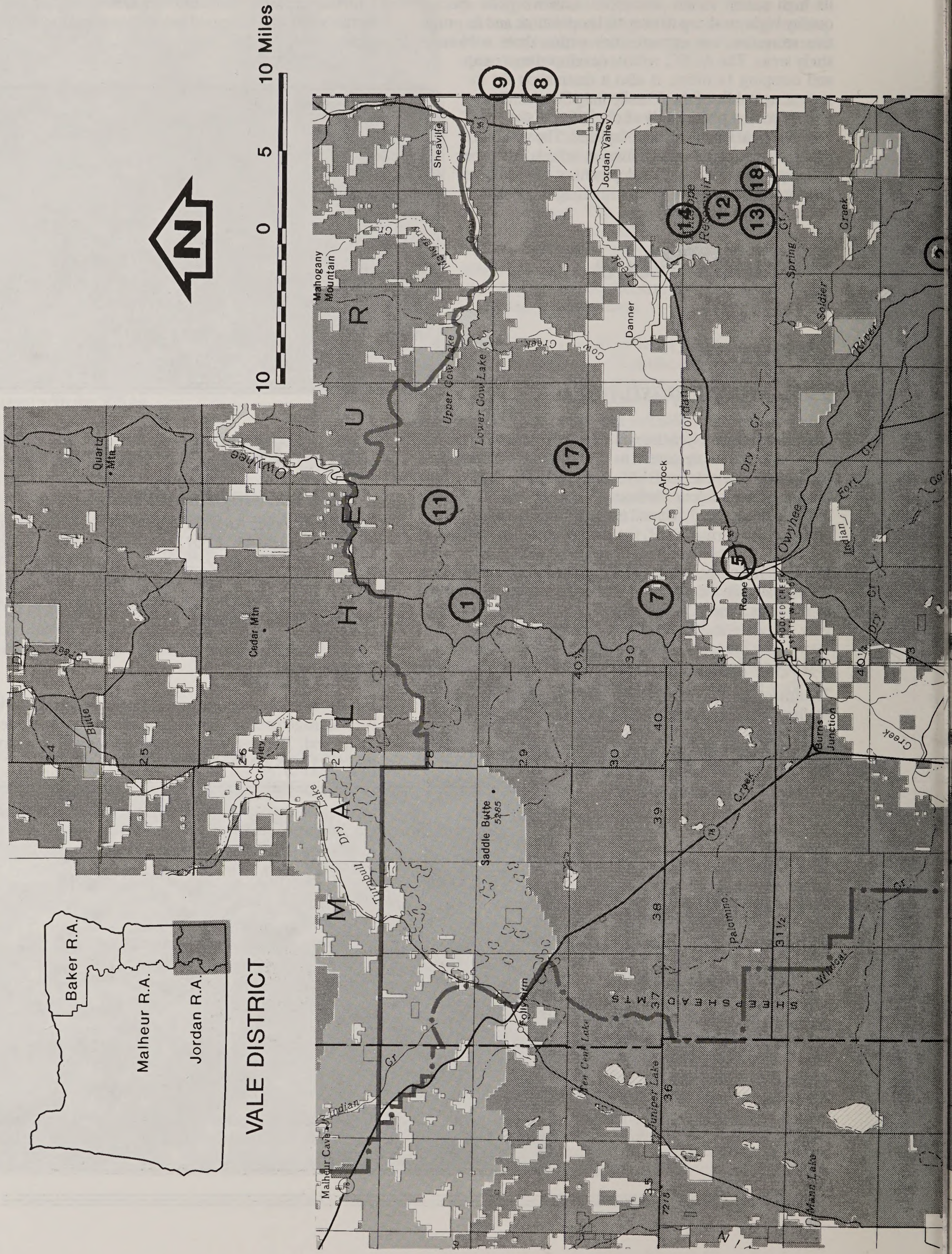
While there are no programmed horse gatherings for 1993, herd management areas will continue to be inventoried and monitored. The seven unadoptable horses will be returned to the Hog Creek HMA in January 1993.







# VALE DISTRICT







LEGEND

- - - District Boundary
- Planning Area Boundary
- BLM Lands
- State Lands
- Private Lands

④ New Proposed 1993 Project

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
Bureau of Land Management

VALE DISTRICT  
Jordan Resource Area

1993



# Environmental Assessment Register

An environmental analysis of potential effects is required, according to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), for any on-the-ground actions before approval is given to proceed with such actions. NEPA also requires that the analyses be open to the public.

During FY 1993, the Malheur Resource Area will analyze several on-the-ground actions projected to occur during the year or in future years. A register of the environmental assessments (EAs) anticipated for completion in FY 1993 is provided on the table below to facilitate public participation in this analysis process. In addition, a legal notice of availability will be published in the Ontario Argus Observer newspaper for all EAs prepared for the resource area. These notices will include any EA that had not been anticipated in this register. Each notice will describe the proposed action, location, timeframes for comment, and availability of the EA.

If you would like to receive any of the listed EAs, please notify the District Planning & Environmental Coordinator in writing at the Vale District Office. For proper identification of the EAs, indicate both the Area Register Number and the Project Name when making your request.

No.	Project Name	Proposed Action	Project Location	Affected Special Area	Est. EG Complete Date	Est. FONSI Decision Date
1	Leslie Gulch Management Plan ACEC/EA	Management Plan	T.26S., R.44E., T.26S., R.45E.	Leslie Gulch	Spring	summer
2	TransPacific Geothermal Development	Exploratory Drilling Geothermal Development	T.18S., R.45E.	None	Spring/ Fall	Fall
3	Hunter Creek Riparian Fence	Fence construction	T.21S., R.39E., Sec. 20, 27, 28	None	Summer	Summer
4	Shovel Basin Reservoir	Construction of new reservoir	T.21S., R.39E., Sec. 28	None	Summer	Summer
5	Canyon Creek Reservoir	Construction of new Reservoir	T.21., R.38E., Sec. 33	None	Summer	Summer
6	Special recreation permits — Horse endurance, guiding/outfitting		Various	Will depend on site	April to Sept.	Various
7	Oregon-Idaho Utilities	Underground fibre optic line	T.22S., R.45E.	None	Summer	Summer
8	Gravel Ridge Fence Realignment	Realign 1.25 miles of existing fenceline	T.19S., R.45E.,	None	Winter	Winter
9	King Brown Fence	Construct 1.5 miles of riparian management fence	T.24S., R.41E., Sec. 7	None	Summer	Summer



No.	Project Name	Proposed Action	Project Location	Affected Special Area	Est. EG Complete Date	Est. FONSI Decision Date
10	Alkali Well	Drill and equip well for stock water	T.16S., R.45E. Sec. 5	None	Summer	Summer
11	South Alkali Coordinated Activity Plan	Activity Manage- ment Plan	T.15S., R.45E., T.16S., R.45E.	Oregon Trail	Fall	Winter
12	Turner Creek Electric Fence	Construction of temporary electric Fence	T.17S., R.42E., Sec. 1, 2, 3, 4	None	Spring	Spring



# Environmental Assessment Register

Project Name	Project Number	Project Location	Project Status	Project Type	Project Category
1. [Project Name]	[Project Number]	[Project Location]	[Project Status]	[Project Type]	[Project Category]
2. [Project Name]	[Project Number]	[Project Location]	[Project Status]	[Project Type]	[Project Category]
3. [Project Name]	[Project Number]	[Project Location]	[Project Status]	[Project Type]	[Project Category]
4. [Project Name]	[Project Number]	[Project Location]	[Project Status]	[Project Type]	[Project Category]
5. [Project Name]	[Project Number]	[Project Location]	[Project Status]	[Project Type]	[Project Category]
6. [Project Name]	[Project Number]	[Project Location]	[Project Status]	[Project Type]	[Project Category]
7. [Project Name]	[Project Number]	[Project Location]	[Project Status]	[Project Type]	[Project Category]
8. [Project Name]	[Project Number]	[Project Location]	[Project Status]	[Project Type]	[Project Category]
9. [Project Name]	[Project Number]	[Project Location]	[Project Status]	[Project Type]	[Project Category]
10. [Project Name]	[Project Number]	[Project Location]	[Project Status]	[Project Type]	[Project Category]







**UNITED STATES  
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT**

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